



# Days of Future Past

By

Julie Anne Swayze

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## Days of Future Past

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DEDICATION/ACKNOWLEDGEMENT- To my husband Steve

# Days of Future Past... 13

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Lily's heart pounded as the sound of the beating drums intensified. She moved her hips from side to side as she locked eyes with a male dancer from across the room. She smiled and began to dance towards him. His body was swaying to the African beat. He was tall and handsome, of obvious Creole and Cajun descent as was Lily. She hadn't seen him before at any of Madame G's gatherings. Lily began attending these gatherings with her mother as a small child growing up in Algiers, a small city outside of New Orleans.

To Lily Voodoo was her religion, she practiced it now in secret, only a few close friends and relatives knew. Even Edmund, her husband was unaware that she met with a small group of men and women in the backroom of a Voodoo parlor in New Orleans's French Quarter. Edmund was too practical a man to understand the world of Voodoo. She knew he would be upset if he knew.

The male dancer was closer now, his hips swaying in rhythm with Lily's. She found herself drawn to him. As she moved towards him she felt giddy with passion. Closer inspection showed that he was tall, well over six feet. His dark brown curly hair felt in ringlets around his face. The thing that Lily found most attractive about him were his eyes, they were a bewitching hazel green.

Lily closed her eyes as he wrapped his arms around her waist and

pressed his body up against her. Her thoughts were not of her husband Edmund, but a million miles away as the drums pounded louder and louder. She felt herself slip into a deep trance. She didn't fight it; letting it take her over, until she felt she was having an out of body experience. Lily moaned as the mysterious stranger kissed her neck. Wrapping her arms around his neck, she opened her eyes. For a moment she thought his pupils were bright red, blood red. She broke free of their embrace and ran to the door at the back of the shop and out into the alley.

His eyes scared the hell out of her, even if she had imagined it, she found it frightening. She headed home to Edmund who believed she had been visiting a relative, which was partially true, Madame Gastineau was her aunt. She also held the once per month Voodoo ceremonies.

It was late, a quarter to midnight, she doubted Edmund would still be awake. Lily's thoughts drifted ahead to the impending dinner party that she and Edmund would be hosting the following evening. One of Edmund's new junior partners and his wife would be dining with them. She had to ensure that all of the details were just right, Edmund was a perfectionist. Making a good impression on his staff, even his junior staff, was very important to him. Edmund's need for perfection drove her crazy. He always had to have the final approval on her choice of clothing, the food they ate, just about everything she did. Maybe that was why she loved the Voodoo gatherings so much; it was something she didn't need his approval for.

The street in the Garden district where Lily and Edmund lived was eerily quiet in the predawn hours. A black cat darted out in front of Lily's car. She slammed on the brakes narrowly missing it. Her nerves were shot, her hand shook as she wiped beads of perspiration from her brow. Lily turned into her driveway, parked the car, and slipped in the side door. The house was dark, saved for one light. Flo, her devoted housekeeper had left it on for her.

Lily quickly washed up and slid into bed beside Edmund. He stirred, but did not wake up as she climbed under the covers. Pulling the comforter up to her neck, she closed her eyes. The blood red eyes of the dancer flashed in her mind once more before she drifted off to sleep.

### **That next evening...**

Lily sat at her dressing table contemplating what jewelry to wear that evening. Her Grandmother's pearls or the diamond earring and necklace Edmund bought her for her last birthday. Tonight they were having a simple dinner party for the junior partner and his wife. Edmund was forever taking one of the junior partners under his wings, showing him or her the ropes.

Lily played with her hair in the mirror. Even after fifteen years, she was still very insecure about her looks even though she was the one Edmund chose to be his wife. It had been a surprise to everyone when they had announced their engagement. He was after all the most eligible bachelor in the Garden District and she was an outsider.

If only they knew how she had worked her charms on Edmund. How indeed? She wasn't the typical 'desperate' trophy wife with big blond hair, a size two frame, and dripping in jewels. No, Lily was 'Rubenesque' by today's standards. She was tall, nearly six feet, round and curvy, tipping the scales at two-hundred and twenty-two pounds. Her skin was a warm café au lait; her curly hair golden-brown ringlets framing a heart shaped face. She definitely was not the typical wife of a Garden District banker, especially in New Orleans. Lily had what no other social climber had in her bag of tricks. She was a direct descendant of Madame Marie LeVeau; one of New Orleans most powerful Voodoo priestesses.

Lily discovered her abilities as a small child, if she wanted something to happen, she needed only to concentrate on it, and the results would be in her favor.

As was the case of Edmund Barrington, tall, dark and handsome banker from a prominent Garden District family. She wanted him from the moment she set eyes on him.

He was quite a catch for any woman that could reel him in. The odds were stacked against her, given that she was from the wrong side of the tracks.

Once she had set her sights on Edmund, Lily began researching everything about him. Where he worked, who his friends were, and how he spent his weekends. With the exception of his love of Cuban cigars, she found everything about him fascinating.



She planned their first meeting months in advance, carefully going over the details until they were perfect. To this day Edmund believed they had met by chance, little did he know.

Lily knew Edmund's bank sponsored a charity fundraiser at the local library. This was an opportunity for Mercantile Pinnacle to show the community they weren't just about money; they were also about giving back.

Lily signed up to be one of the many volunteers on hand to work with the kids. She made it a point to chat up one of the staff members to find out where Edmund would be assigned so that she could volunteer for the same area. Their task was to help the children decorate paper masks.

She smiled at him whenever she glanced in his direction, smiles he seemed only too willing to return. Each time she looked at him, she let her gaze linger a bit longer. As she helped the children glue feather and beads onto their masks, she could feel Edmund staring at her. She would look up and he'd look away as if caught doing something bad. Lily flipped her hair away from her face and licked her lips while looking directly at Edmund, she smiled and then winked at him. Lily repeated a simple conjure used to make a man attracted to you. As she repeated the words, she could see that Edmund was having a hard time concentrating on what he was doing. He was slow to respond to the children and beads of perspiration pooled on his forehead. When he looked her way, she smiled, inviting him into her very soul. Her heart quickened when he walked over to her table.

"I don't think we've met?"

"No, I don't think we have. I'm Lily LeVeau."

"I'm Edmund Barrington," he said taking her hand and kissing it, his lips lingered in a caress.

"Enchante'." Lily giggled as his moist lips touched her hand.

"I can't help but feel that I know you, but clearly I don't," he said, still holding her hand.

"Perhaps in another life," she responded, giving his hand a suggestive squeeze.

"Would you like..." Edmund started to say.

"Yes, I would." She led him pass the roped-off area of the library and up a flight of stairs to the second floor. Lily pulled him pass rows of books until they were at the very back of the reference section, where she pressed him up against the wall.

"What did you have in mind?" Edmund asked, watching her unzip his pants, a sly grin on his face.

"I don't know, I thought we would just talk about the weather," slipping her hand inside his pants. She slid her fingers through the hole in his briefs and massaged his firm penis.

He groaned, moving his hips in rhythm with her strokes, leaning forward he kissed her, sliding his tongue between her lips as he unbuttoned her blouse.

Suddenly he pulled away, and spun her around to face the wall. He lifted

her cotton skirt and pulled her pink thong down her thighs until they rested around her ankles.

‘Nice ass,’ he moaned before pushing his middle finger into her moist pussy.

Lily moaned softly as he explored her with his fingers. He moved his thumb to her clit, stroking back and forth against her hard nib.

She grabbed his arm, stopping him.

“Don’t you like it?” Obviously stunned that she had stopped him.

“No silly, I’m about to go crazy if we don’t do it right now.”

“If you insist.” With one motion he rammed his hardness into her. Lily gasped as he entered her. She arched her back so that he could thrust himself deeper into her.

She squeezed his hands and bite down on her tongue to stifle her screams as she climaxed.

“I must say, this has been the best part of the day so far,” Edmund noted after zipping up his pants.

“I would have to agree. So, I guess we should get back to our duties as ‘volunteers’,” Lily said with a grin that could rival the Cheshire cat.

“Yes, that would be the right thing to do.” Taking her hand, he led her downstairs.

They didn’t return to their duties as volunteers. Edmund drove Lily back to his home in the Garden District and they spent the afternoon making love,

only taking breaks to eat.

That was how it had begun fifteen years ago. Edmund and Lily had been inseparable, together night and day. Her conjure had worked only too well, but now things had changed. Edmund's interest had wane over the years. Sex was infrequent and mechanical, not the hot and steamy lovemaking sessions of the past. She had everything that money could buy a lovely house, a weekend house, jewels, and the occasional affair. Yet there was something missing, something else she still yearned for. She wanted Edmund to lust after her like he had all those years ago.

Shaking herself from her reverie, Lily reminded herself that she needed to finish getting dressed for the dinner party. It was nice having people out to the house; she'd been so lonely lately, so lonely. She glanced in the mirror. Not a bad face. She would be thirty-nine this year. She looked at the antique Louis XIV clock, a gift from her mother-in-law, on her dressing table. It was almost seven-thirty; their guests would be arriving shortly. Lily put the finishing touches on her make-up. She knew that Edmund would probably be dressed and drinking cocktails down in his study, waiting on her to go to the observatory.

The observatory was her favorite part of the house; a house that had been in Edmund's family for generations. It was built especially for Edmund's great-great grandfather, an amateur astronomer. The room was painted completely white; one wall was made of glass panes that ran from the floor to ceiling. The ceiling was a glass dome. A giant old-fashioned telescope, the kind you could sit

on, dominated the middle of the room. Lily loved entertaining guests in the observatory; the telescope was a great ice-breaker.

A knock at the door pulled her from her thoughts.

"Excuse me Ms. Barrington, the guests have arrived.

Lily glanced at the clock. "What are their names again?"

"Mr. John Feliton and his wife, Christine."

"I see. I'll come down shortly, Flo. Thank you."

Lily quickly put on her diamonds and touched up her makeup. She checked herself one last time in the mirror before exiting her dressing room. She was happy with the pale coral dress she had chosen to wear, with its empire waist and revealing neckline, she was sure to be the belle of the ball.

Who were these uncultured people that would dare come to a dinner party on time Lily mused as she descended the marble staircase.

She spotted them right away in the foyer. Her first thoughts were that they were very young, maybe mid-twenties. Lily felt suddenly old and jaded. The wife was a tall slender blond. She wore very little make-up. Lily's impression of her was that she was a plain Jane. John on the other hand caught Lily's eye. She had a hard time not staring at him. She could tell he had been an athlete in his college days. His short brown curly hair, almost kinky in its texture suited him. His eyes were brown like chocolate truffles, and he had the most endearing smile. She could not look away as she descended the stairs towards the pair.

Lily walked up to the Christine, the woman-child first.

"You must be Christine, I'm Lily," extending her hand. Turning slightly, she beamed, "Hello, John, I'm Lily. I've heard so much about both of you."

Lily could tell that they were overwhelmed by her and the immense house.

"Why don't we go into the observatory for drinks?" Lily said, leading the way through the grand hall.

"Your house is amazing. I've never seen anything like it," Christine remarked. "I feel like I'm in a castle. How big is it exactly?"

"It's four stories plus a basement and an attic. There are ten bedrooms, and seven bathrooms, maids' quarters, living room, drawing rooms, a den and offices. I'm not sure exactly how many square feet, but it's big."

"Incredible," John and Christine said together.

Lily knew that the observatory would impress them even more. She stood in the middle of the room as they ooh'd, and ahh'd over the ancient telescope, the windows, and the view of the stars.

"You must look at stars all the time, Mrs. Barrington," John said.

Lily felt like Edmund's mother. "Please call me Lily. I do look occasionally. Stars are really Edmund's passion though."

She rather liked John's face. It was so innocent and sweet. She was lost in his eyes when he smiled and she realized that she was still staring at him long after the conversation had ended.

"You'll have to come out again for a weekend so that you can see the grounds. The gardens are quite spectacular."

"We'd love that," Christine gushed.

"Would you now?" Edmund said from beside the door.

Edmund appeared as only Edmund could, in a smoking jacket, a pipe in one hand and the newspaper in the other.

"Lily, I don't see a drink in our guests' hands."

"Eddy, I was getting to the drinks." Lily walked behind the long cherry-wood bar with the zinc counter. Edmund's great grandfather had imported it from Paris in the last century.

Lily glanced back at the young couple. "What can I get you two?"

"Ah, I'm not much of a drinker. I guess some white wine would be fine."

"OK, that's not a problem. John, how about you?"

"I'll take a beer"

"Domestic or imported?"

"Why don't you surprise me?" John added.

Lily smiled as she picked a nice German beer that Edmund enjoyed. Lily poured herself a glass of white wine and made Edmund a martini. Finished, she joined the group on the overstuffed sofas that faced the reflecting pool outside.

Edmund, John and Christine talked about the weather, politics and sports. Edmund droned on about every subject imaginable, Lily having heard it all before, was bored. There was not a lot that Edmund and Lily had in common

these days. They had two completely separate lives, friends and interests. She had never once felt the need to find mutual hobbies, preferring her own as Edmund preferred his.

She couldn't help staring at John. He seemed quite intrigued by Edmund. Lily could tell by looking at them that he viewed Edmund as a father figure. She knew that Edmund felt the same way; he was always mentoring some young man or the other at the firm. How anyone could find what Edmund did interesting was beyond Lily. She much preferred her garden teas, shopping and classical music concerts.

Lily's mind continued to drift as Edmund talked about the changing world economy. She thought about her best friend since childhood, Amanda. Lady Amanda was away in Europe on an assignment. She was Lily's oldest and dearest friend, they had grown up together. Lily's mother had worked in Amanda's parent's stately antebellum mansion. Lily's education was paid for by Amanda's mother. They attended the same boarding school and women's college. Amanda a freelance fashion stylist was in Milan on a buying trip for her clients. Amanda had incredible taste, she had always been the best dressed in their school. Lily missed sitting up until dawn drinking champagne and listening to Amanda's stories about traversing the globe for a perfect hat for a client. When Amanda brought back aromatic teas from India, or spices from the islands, Lily was always the first person she showed her finds to. Twice divorced, she was loved jet-setting around the world with her latest love, a bohemian painter half



her age. Her first husband was Lord Edgerly of Buckinghamshire, a small village in northern England. Lady Amanda kept the title after the divorce, using it during her very brief second marriage a movie producer whom she had caught in bed with numerous starlets on more than one occasion. Lady Amanda knew how to live. Lily had always envied her. They shared everything and would never betray each other's trust.

"Now, Edmund, please don't bore the guests," she said walking over to him and patting him on the shoulder.

He seemed annoyed but obliged his wife.

"Sorry, I'm afraid my wife has no interest in world economy." There was an edge to his voice.

Now it was Lily who was annoyed.

"Yes dear, whatever you say," Lily said smiling at him.

"Now if you'll follow me, I believe that Flo has hors d'oeuvres for us in the sun room."

"My, you must get lost in a house this size," John walking beside Lily observed.

"I did when I first moved in, but now I know my way round. There are loads of secret passageways throughout the house. I think some of them date back to the Underground Railroad."

"Secret passageways, how romantic," Christine giggled.

"You think everything's romantic," John chided her.

"Ah, youth, do you remember how it was Lily?" Edmund asked.

"I have this vague memory of it. I do remember you rowing me around the lake, and lots of picnics, that sort of thing."

"That sounds absolutely wonderful." Christine cast John a jealous look.

"Like I said, you'll have to come out for the weekend. We can go rowing around the lake, take walks and have a picnic," Lily offered.

"You have a lake?" John asked.

"Yes, and there are some pretty good trout in there as well, if fishing is your thing."

"You're kidding, I love to fish," John said eagerly.

"Then, it's all settled. You'll come back as soon as you have a free weekend." Lily beamed at her guests.

Flo had built a large fire in the white marble fireplace in the sun room. The room was decorated in warm earth tones, furnished with cozy overstuffed sofas and chairs. The talk was casual and free. Lily could tell that Christine and John were enjoying themselves immensely. She was fascinated by John. Such energy and vitality, she had not seen those traits in anyone in a long time. They sat there for nearly an hour laughing at funny stories that Edmund and John told about the other employees at the firm. Lily had to think back to remember the last time she had laughed so long and hard. If there had been such a time, she could not remember it. She almost felt embarrassed to be having such a good time. Most of her day was spent shopping and lunching.

Flo rang the dinner bell summoning the group to the dining room. The dining room was long and narrow, in the middle of the room sat an enormous table that could seat thirty. Tonight Flo had reduced it to comfortably seat four. Lily and Edmund sat facing each other at opposite ends of the oval table, like a King and his Queen she mused. Edmund raised his glass and cleared his throat.

“I’d like to make a toast to my new junior partner and his lovely wife, may you prosper at the firm.”

Lily smiled as she glanced from John to Christine, they all lifted glasses in unison. Lily sipped her wine, and looked at Edmund. He smiled at her and his eyes flashed red like the young dancer’s. Lily gasped, and dropped her glass. It shattered into pieces on her dinner plate.

“Oh, my goodness, are you okay?” John rushed to her side.

“I’m fine,” Lily gingerly picking the shards of glass from her lap responded.

Flo,” Edmund called to the maid, “Could you be a darling and clean up after Mrs. Barrington?”

Flo appeared with a dishtowel and dustpan and quickly cleared the mess.

“So sorry about that, please continue to eat. Flo will bring me another plate.”

Edmund didn’t say a word to her. She watched him dig into his salad, and make small talk with John. This was the second time she had seen his eyes glow red, she wasn’t imagining it. She would have to speak with Madame G about it.

Now was not the time to worry about her visions, if they were in fact visions. She needed to focus on her guests.

She heard herself asking the question, "So, when are you two going to come back and spend a weekend with us?"

Both John and Christine turned to her. "Let's see, next weekend we have John's mother's birthday party. After that, we're out of town, but we are free for the rest of the month, unless I'm forgetting something?" Christine turned to John.

No, I can't think of anything. How about the 26<sup>th</sup>? That's three weeks from this Saturday. Will that work?"

Edmund looked at Lily, she was the one that kept their social calendar. "Yes, as a matter of fact it can. The 26<sup>th</sup> would be fine. Why don't you two come on Friday, that way we'll have the entire weekend?"

John and Christine agreed. Lily's heart raced, she had something to look forward to.

The dinner had been a success. The quartet chatted over dessert and coffee until Christine noticed the time. John and Christine said their goodnights and promised to return in three weeks. Lily and Edmund retired to their bedroom.

Lily sat at her dressing table brushing her auburn hair.

"I thought they were a lovely couple. I look forward to seeing them again."

Edmund looked up from his newspaper. "What did you say dear?"

"I said they were a lovely couple, don't you agree. She's just charming."

“Yes, yes charming, both of them. Look at this Lilly, Beresford is selling out. I can’t believe it.”

Lily had tuned Edmund out, and was thinking about John.

She turned to ask Edmund a question, and his eyes flashed red. Lily dropped her brush and managed to stifle a scream.

Edmund smiled at her as he continued to read his newspaper. Picking up her brush, she felt a chill run down her spine.

\* \* \* \*

Early the next morning shortly after Edmund left for work Lily dressed and drove down to the French Quarter to see Madame Gastineau.

Lily wore dark sunglasses and a yellow and red scarf wrapped around her head as she walked through the back alley that led to Madame G’s shop. Madame G’s shop had always fascinated her. She had so many exotic bits and pieces hanging from the ceiling, even the shelves were covered with interesting displays. Most of the items were there merely to amuse the tourist; the true believer’s items were tucked away behind the counters.

Lily smiled as she spotted Madame G sitting in an overstuffed Queen Anne chair sipping tea. Her gaze fixed on a large red tabby cat cleaning itself on a bookshelf.

“I could have told you my dear that you’d be back soon. I consulted the bones this morning, and they tell me you are in need of answers.” Madame G took another sip of tea.

Lily removed her scarf and sunglasses and sat in the chair opposite Madame's.

"Yes, I've seen some things, first at the 'gathering, and now at home. I don't know if I am imaging it or if what I'm seeing is even real."

"My dear, I do not know. I will tell you that I can give you a potion that should protect you."

"Should? Don't you have anything that 'will' protect me?"

"I'm not all together sure what we're dealing with. Try this potion, and if it does not work, come back."

Madame G rose from her chair and stepped behind the counter where she removed a small bag from a drawer. Lily was beginning to get annoyed with Madame G. She walked over and pressed several bills into Madame G's hand. She took the potion, thanked her and walked back out into the alley.

She opened the velvet bag and pulled the ornate bottle from it. The ruby red glass was covered with strange hieroglyphs. She assumed it was either Egyptian or Aztec. Lily pulled out the stopper, and inhaled the mixture before drinking it. The aroma of roses wafts up to fill her senses. Somehow it smelled different from the previous protection potions she had used. Perhaps Madame G had changed the ingredients in recent years. Lily glanced around the alley to make sure there was no one around.

She closed her eyes and spoke the incantation three times.

"Use this potion to protect me, so mote it shall be, so mote it shall be, so

mote it shall be....”

She drank the entire bottle in one gulp. At first she didn’t feel anything. Then her body began to tingle, her arms and legs, stomach and breasts. She then felt the tingling in between her legs. It felt warm and nice, as if someone was tickling her with a feather in her most private of areas. Lily opened her eyes, she placed the bottle back into the velvet bag and tossed it in a nearby dumpster before heading to her car.

She decided to pop by Edmund’s office for lunch after she did a bit of shopping. It would keep her mind off what was happening. She hoped the potion would keep her from seeing visions.

Lily drove to Edmund’s office in the Garden District. She quickly checked her make-up in the rearview mirror, when she noticed John Feliton getting out of his car. Closing her compact, Lily jumped out of her car and ran across the parking lot towards him, wanting to catch him before he went into the building.

“Hi John.”

John spun around to face her. “Mrs. Barrington, I mean Lily, hello. How are you doing?”

“I’m fine, thank you. I thought I would pop in and visit Edmund on his lunch break.”

“Oh, you just missed him. He left with the senior partners to go into the French Quarter for lunch.” John pointed to Edmund’s empty parking space.

Lily glanced at John. She couldn’t help but notice how cute he was. She

could imagine herself with him. His muscles were evident through his tight buttoned down shirt. His slacks fit him very well, showing off his nice ass.

“Can you let him know that I came by?”

“Maybe it would be better if you leave him a note.

Lily spun around. “That’s a great idea.” She followed him into the building. They rode up in the private elevator in the rear of the building, reserved for penthouse employees.

Lily smiled politely and made small talk. John smiled back, and straightened his tie a few times. He fidgeted so much Lily got the impression that he was nervous.

“Here we are.” He stepped aside to let her off the elevator first.

Lily was always amazed by the massive office in which Edmund worked. Mercantile Pinnacle had spared no expense renovating the old antebellum mansion. Edmund’s office was at the end of the suite of offices, behind large craved wooden double doors. Bidding farewell to John, Lily opened the doors and walked over to Edmund’s ridiculously large desk. She found pen and paper with the bank’s letterhead and quickly wrote her note. She was just finishing when she heard the door close behind her.

She turned around to see John standing in front of her.

“Hi again,” was all she could find to say.

She didn’t move as John rushed to her, covering her face and neck with kisses. His kisses were wet and hot.



John's hands roamed all over her body. Lily was a little taken aback, there was nothing that she had said or done that would have led John to believe she was coming on to him. Perhaps Madame G's potion was having an effect.

"What brought this on? You know we're in my husband's office."

John pulled away as if a spell had been broken. Stepping back, he straightened his tie.

"Then we should go to my office down the hall. No one will disturb us there." Taking her hand, he led her out of the office. Lily crumpled up the note she was going to leave for Edmund and place it in her pocket. Smiling to herself, she followed John to his lair not fifteen feet away from her Edmund's office.

Lily giggled like a school girl when John opened the door to his much smaller office. He swept his hand across surface of his desk in a grandiose gesture, one that almost made Lily laugh. She was reminded of some sleazy television late night movie.

"Why Mr. Feliton whatever did you have in mind?" She said as she sat on the end of the desk.

John loosened his tie as he stood between her legs. "I have to admit, I find you very attractive," he said unbuttoning his shirt.

"Just attractive?" She teased.

"And sexy, I was about to say sexy." Peeling off his shirt to reveal his muscular chest, and washboard abs. Lily ran her hands over his chest and shoulders as he unzipped his pants.

She ran her hands over his chest and shoulders as he unzipped his pants. Her eyes were huge as John's pants slid down to his knees. His penis was large and very erect. Her eyes were glued to it. Pushing herself back on the desk, Lily pushed her skirt up to her waist. She moaned as John parted her legs and pulled her black lacy thong to the side as he ran his hands down her inner thighs. He slid his thumb inside of her, using his index finger to massage her clit. Lily pulled her tee shirt off and unhooked her bra, moaning softly as she played with her nipples.

"I love your body," John said kissing her knee.

"There's a lot to love." Lily looked down at her ample bosom.

"I like big girls."

"I can tell," she said grabbing him and working her hips in rhythm with his thrusts.

John pulled Lily's legs up onto his shoulders. Lily closed her eyes as she felt herself about to climax. When she did she bit her tongue so that she would not scream.

John came seconds after she did, collapsing on her in exhaustion. He lay on top of her breathing heavy for several minutes.

"That was nice," Lily said to break the awkward silence.

"That was wild. I mean I just had sex with my boss's wife. That's no way to get promoted." John's pupils turned red briefly before returning to their normal brown.

Lily pushed him away and slid off the desk. She buttoned her blouse and pulled her skirt down.

“I have to go.”

“What did I say? I didn’t mean to offend you, Lily. I mean I don’t normally do this sort of thing.”

“Its fine John, I just have to go.”

Lily grabbed her purse and ran towards the door. This was the fourth time she’s seen eyes flashing red. All she wanted to do was to get away. Madame G’s potion was not working. Poking her head out the door, Lily made sure the coast was clear. Without saying goodbye to John, she ran down the long hallway to the stairwell. She thought that would be safer than using the executive elevator and running into Edmund or one of his colleagues. Lily was completely freaked out by John and his red eyes.

Opening the door a crack, she swung her head right and left, seeing Edmund’s parking spot empty, she ran to her car.

She wondered why the potion Madame G had given her didn’t seem to be working. She expected that it would stop her from having these visions. As she sped along Main Street her phone rang. ‘Yes, Flo is there something wrong?’

“Ms. Barrington, you didn’t leave out a menu plan. What would you like for dinner?”

Lily thought about it for a split second before answering.

“Flo, Mr. Barrington and I will order in, don’t worry about it,” Lily said

hanging up.

\* \* \* \*

It had been a week since Lily had sex with John. She had not heard from him, nor had she bothered to call him herself. She was quite annoyed with him, the least he could have done was to call her, and see if she were still alive. Lily was in a dreary mood all morning until the phone rang and everything changed.

"Missus, the phone is for you," Flo called.

"Thank you, Flo."

"Lily speaking."

"Darling I'm back and I'm just absolutely dying to see you and tell you all about Paris. Do tell me you'll have me to lunch, and that you'll serve a mean Martini?"

"Of course, Amanda, of course. God, I've so much to tell you."

"Delicious, I've so much to tell you. For starters, I've kicked Giles out."

"What? I thought you two were so perfect for each other."

"Yes, well I thought that as well, apparently so did his girlfriend. I caught them in my bed when I flew in. Can you imagine that?"

"Oh, dear, then you're right to be rid of him. Come to lunch, and we'll sort it all out."

An hour later Lily heard Amanda's car in the driveway, the horn sounded like someone stepping on a duck. Lily rushed to the window to see Amanda jumped out of a brand new fire-engine red roadster. She ran out of the room,

down the hall and out the front door, throwing her arms around her friend. The women held the embraced for a few seconds before letting go. Lily could feel tears well up in her eyes, but fought them back. Instead she looked down at Amanda's flashy car.

"When did you get this car, darling?" Lily asked, squeezing her friend's hands.

"Don't you remember? I bought it when Carlo and I split up. It's been in the warehouse with the others. I just felt like driving it today. Joie de vivre and all."

"Come inside and let's drink to more exciting days." Lily took Amanda's arm.

"Something tells me that you've got lots to tell me? Is Edmund treating you all right?"

"Why yes, of course. Why wouldn't he be?"

"You seem different. I thought something might be wrong."

"No, not at all. It's just been crazy lately, we've been entertaining a lot, and I've been busy with the house."

Lily knew that she would not be able to hide her feelings from Amanda.

"Tell me what's going on? I can't stand it."

"First some tea, we have to start our day right."

Amanda flung her black hat unto a nearby chair. Kicking off her brown leather Italian-made mules, she tucked her feet under her legs.

“Darling I desperately need sleep, but for you, I’m up, so make it good.”

Lily smiled at her long-time friend. They had been trading secrets for over thirty years. She knew that no matter how scandalous a story, Amanda would never tell a soul, she would take her secret with her to the grave.

Lily rang the bell that would tell Flo to bring in the food tray.

“Flo, you’ve outdone yourself,” Amanda said eyeing the cakes and sandwiches.

“Lady Amanda, it’s so nice to see you.” Flo smiled.

“How are you, Flo? And how’s that handsome son of yours.” Amanda winked at Lily.

“He’s doing fine. He graduates from college next spring.”

“Wonderful,” Lady Amanda gushed.

Flo excused herself, closing the doors of the drawing room behind her.

“Amanda you really are awful.”

“I was only teasing. Now back to you, what is going on with you?”

“Well,” Lily looked around the room, “I’ve sort of been seeing things.”

She couldn’t look Amanda in the eyes.

“Honey, what sort of things?”

“I think I’m going to sound crazy, but I know you won’t judge me.”

“No, I would never do that, ever.” Amanda reached over and touched Lily’s arm.

“The other night I was talking to Edmund, and his eyes glowed red, not

the whites of his eyes, but his actual pupils. That wasn't the first time I've seen something like that."

"When were the other times?"

"I had an encounter." Lily began.

"An encounter? With whom?"

"You don't know him."

"Okay, so what happened?"

"After we were done, his eyes flashed red as well, just like Edmund's. I don't know if I'm imagining it, or if it's real."

"Was there any other times?"

Lily thought back to the night at Madame G's. "Yes, at the gathering the other night there was a young guy I didn't know him, but he was in a trance and when he opened his eyes, they were red."

Lady Amanda knew about Lily's involvement with Voodoo. She neither approved nor disapproved of it. Amanda raised an eyebrow and took another sip of tea before speaking.

"Lily, it all makes perfect sense to me. You're tired, probably suffering from fatigue, and so, you thought you saw red pupils. I mean, do you think you were seeing the devil or something?"

Lily didn't speak. That was exactly what she thought she was seeing, some manifestation of the devil through Edmund and John. She was creeped out, and didn't feel that Madame G's potions could protect her.

"Lily, you are a beautiful woman, who is just under a lot of stress right now. Maybe you and Edmund should take a vacation, you know, go away for a few weeks.

"I wish I could, but you know the Edmund's firm is always so crazy, if we wanted to take a trip we have to plan it months ago."

"I think having sex with John was my way of taking a vacation, from reality. When I saw John, he had what I no longer have."

"What is that, dear?"

"Passion, he was what Edmund used to be."

Amanda knew from her own experience that Lily's attraction to John would end badly.

"Listen here, think long and hard on this before you continue in your current direction. Remember women are the ones who get their hearts broken, not the men."

"Yes, I am fully aware of that fact. John and his wife will be coming over next weekend. I'm going to take my time with it. See how things develop."

"Smart girl. By the way, Flo has truly outdone herself." Amanda looked over at the sandwiches and cakes. She stayed for the rest of the afternoon and into early evening. Before she left they made plans to get together for lunch at the beginning of the following week.

Lily took a shower and changed into a beige cotton skirt and matching blouse. She was blow-drying her hair when she heard the phone. She waited



once for Flo to pick it up, but then she decided to answer it in case it was Edmund.

“Hello?” Lily said.

“Lily it’s me Edmund, did Flo give you my message?”

“The one where you won’t be home in time for dinner?”

“Well, as it turns out, I will be home, and I’m bringing people.”

“People? What people? How many? Are these clients?”

“Darling, don’t panic, Flo can adjust her dinner menu to accommodate any number of dinner guests. I’ve already spoken to her. I think you were in the shower. Anyway, I didn’t feel right about not coming home for dinner this evening. Actually it’s three not including me. Yiro Yoshimato and two of his associates are here from Japan. You remember Yiro? I think you met him last year at our year-end gala.”

“Yes, the name sounds familiar.”

“Well anyway, Yiro is a good chap, and his associates are very nice. I just didn’t want to dine out, so I thought it would be great if they all came by. Oh, did I say three,

Not including me. I meant to say four.”

“Who is the other person?” Lily asked, her heart skipped a beat.

“My young apprentice, John.”

There was a long pause before Lily answered. “Will Christine be attending as well?”

“No, she’s unable to make it, something about a cold. She’s still counting on coming out for the weekend, though.”

“Great. I’ll just go down and make sure Flo has everything under control. Do any of our guests have any special diet requirements?”

“No, and honey you’ll be proud to know that I asked ahead of time,” Edmund gloated.

“Wonderful, when can I expect you?”

“Around six. I thought we would have drinks in the observatory.”

“Perfect, see you then.”

She walked down to the kitchen and went over menu plans with Flo. Originally Flo was going to prepare a simply meatloaf, which was one of Lily and Edmund’s favorites. With guests coming, she wanted to cook something a bit fancier. Lily had Flo cook her famous rack of lamb with mango chutney sauce, roast potatoes, endive salad, and raspberry tart for dessert.

Lily looked down at the simple white blouse and gray slacks she was wearing, they were perfect for a casual dinner at home, but not for entertaining Edmund’s business associates. She walked to her massive walk-in closet and began hunting for a more suitable outfit. After a little search she settled on a long-sleeved crème brocade dress with an empire waist that Edmund loved seeing her in. She touched up her make-up and added some more jewelry and spritzed some perfume on her neck and wrists.

Lily thought about John. It would be awkward seeing him again. She

decided to consult with Madame G. She wanted to tell her that the potion didn't work. The phone rang once before Lily heard Madame G's familiar raspy voice.

"Hello, dear Lily."

"I guess that would be the advantage to being a physic, you always knows who is on the other end of the telephone line," Lily laughed.

"I even know why they call," Madame G responded.

"Why do you think I'm calling you?"

"Because you are unhappy with the latest potion, and you've seen the red eyes again, my dear."

"Yes, do you have anything that will ward them off?"

Madame G didn't speak for a moment. "How many times have you had this experience?"

"Four times on three different men."

"Were they all men you had some connection to?"

"Yes, I had some sort of connection to all of them."

"Interesting, my dear. I think you're bringing out the dark side in these men, a side that is normally hidden to the world."

"How is this happening?"

"I don't know Lily, but be careful. Bringing out the dark side in anyone is never a good thing."

"I wish you could give me more information. I need to know if I'm in danger."

“I’ll consult my ball at the séance tonight. Will you be able to attend?”

“No, I have guests. I’ll meet with you another time.”

“Don’t stay away too long.” Lily felt that Madame G’s words were more of a warning than a reminder.

Lily gasped and slammed the phone down on the cradle. What she always suspected was now glaringly apparent. Madame G’s potions were nothing more than rose-flavored juice. What now? As she plotted her next move, she heard Edmund’s voice in another part of the house. Straightening her clothes, she headed towards the observatory.

The groups of men were having a very intense conversation about a piece of art Edmund had purchased in Europe on a trip last year. Lily cleared her throat, and they all turned to face her. Smiling she walked towards the group. Edmund kissed her on the cheek before introducing her to the Japanese businessmen. “You of course know John.”

“Yes,” Lily said looking at John.

He smiled and shook her hand. Lily was taken aback. When she last saw him he seemed very annoyed with her after their encounter in his office. She expected him to be aloof if he had shown up at all. He acted as if nothing happened. She returned his smile and led them off to the observatory for before dinner drinks.

The group enjoyed drinks and stories about the history of the house. Edmund had a way of telling amusing stories like no one Lily ever met. She had

heard the same stories for years and still found them amusing. Edmund was midway through his story about coming face to face with a live alligator on the property when Flo announced dinner.

Lily grabbed John's arm and pulled him aside. Edmund gave her an odd look. She smiled and nodded to him. "We will be along in a moment."

Lily waited for the others to file out of the room before she spoke. "John, I want to apologize for leaving so abruptly last week."

"You don't have to apologize, I understand if you were a little freaked out. I mean it was a one time thing. I thought maybe you were mad at me or something."

Lily didn't know what to say. "No, not at all, I'm sorry to give you that impression. You're right, it was a one time thing, nothing to get upset about."

All through dinner Lily was grateful that John was so mature about the affair. She convinced herself that seeing his eyes flash red was just fatigue on her part. After dinner the men retired to the den for cigars. Lily made an early night of it, and headed up to bed.

\* \* \* \*

### **Two weeks later...**

Lily spent the following week making arrangements for their weekend guests. There were flowers to be ordered, meals to plan and activities to coordinate. She asked Edmund to question John about his and his wife's likes and dislikes concerning food and entertainment. Lily almost ran herself ragged

with preparations. She still had to have her hair and nails done. She thought it would be nice to have a massage while she was at it. Where had the week gone? She was sitting at her desk talking on the phone to her favorite French bakery, when Flo cleared her throat, Lily turned to face her.

“Yes, what is it?”

“I was wondering about the flowers. I forgot to call about them.”

“That’s not like you to forget, Flo. Don’t worry, I took care of it. They should arrive within the hour,”

Lily finished up with the bakery, and drew a bubble bath. She stepped into her large sunken tub with Jacuzzi jets in the sides. She poured her favorite bath crystals in the swirling waters and sank low in the tub letting the jets do their work on her body.

The doorbell chimed at exactly six o’clock. Lily heard Flo opening the front door and John and Christine’s voices in the background. She had instructed Flo to take their guests to the observatory and serve them drinks. Lily hurriedly finished her bath and got dressed before walking down the long hallway to Edmund’s study. Edmund was sitting in his large over-stuffed chair smoking a cigar.

“Edmund how many times must I tell you not to smoke those in the house. Honestly, what will our guests think of the second floor smelling like some old men’s club.”

“Lily, don’t be crossed with me,” Edmund put out his cigar.

“Our guests are here. Let’s go down to meet them.”

“You’ve done a spectacular job, Lily.” Edmund gave her a peck on the cheek.

“Really? I just wanted the place to look nice for our guests. Let’s go not and not keep them waiting.”

Edmund and Lily descended the wide staircase together and walked down to the observatory where their guests were waiting.

“There you are,” Edmund said in greeting.

John and Christine rose from their seats to meet them. Christine hugged Edmund and Lily. John shook Edmund’s hand and hugged Lily.

Lily didn’t pull away, but felt very uncomfortable as John hugged her.

“How was the drive out here?”

“Not too bad, we hit a little traffic. I was wondering what do you usually do when you have guests?” John asked sipping his martini.

“We play tennis, picnic and fish, swim or kayak on the lake. We also have a movie theater and Edmund knows some people in the industry, so we can get any film that is currently playing in the theaters sent out to the house. “

“Oh, Edmund, help me out, what else could we do?”

“Dear, you’ve told them just about everything. The only thing you’ve missed is your parlor game.”

Lily had purposely not mentioned the parlor game. The little game she played with her friends when she was away at school. Sort of truth or dare but

without the dare. Each player had to answer intimate questions about their character and the players had to vote as to whether or not they believed the player was telling the truth. Lily loved this game, because she was good at lying and always won.

“Oh Edmund, I’m not sure about that.”

“Now, you must tell us about it,” John smiled at Lily.

“It’s a game I started playing at boarding school, many, many years ago.

It’s similar to truth or dare, only without the dare. It’s more like, scruples. ”

“I’d like to play, it sounds interesting.” Christine said.

“Maybe tomorrow evening? If the weather holds up we can have Flo pack us a lunch and we can hike up to Box Hill and have a picnic.

“Sound’s wonderful,” Christina gushed.

“John what do you think? Does that sound like fun to you? If you’d like, we can bring poles and do some fishing.”

“Sounds great.”

Lily smiled, the thought of seeing John in his suit gave her a warm fuzzy feeling. “Good, then it’s all decided, now we need to catch up with you two in the drink department,”

Lily said, rising to fix a drink for herself and Edmund.

“Edmund what will you have tonight? Your usual scotch on the rocks or neat?” Lily grabbed the bottle of scotch.

“Ah, tonight, I think a martini like our guests.”



“Good choice, I made this batch myself,” Lily said pouring herself one as well. They sat and made small talk for over an hour. A knock at the door summoned them to dinner.

“I guess we should go into dinner,” Lily said.

“John, if you wouldn’t mind escorting my wife.

I’ll then have the pleasure of doing the same with your wife.”

“Absolutely, what a wonderful tradition,” John noted as he walked towards Lily. He gallantly held out his arm, which she took in hers and they walked towards the grand dining room.

Lily felt like a queen. For some reason when Edmund escorted her into the dining room she felt like his daughter. Even though she and Edmund were close in age, there was something about him that made her feel as though he was more her father, as oppose to her husband that she was in love with.

Edmund and Lily took their places at the beautiful table that she and Flo had decorated.

“John, look at the table. I’ve never seen anything like it. It’s beautiful, Lily. You’ve done a fantastic job.”

“Thank you. Flo came up with the concept. She’s quite talented. You’ll see she’s prepared one of her best dinners, although I’m terribly biased.”

“Edmund laughed. “Flo’s been with us for over ten years. She’s fantastic. If it weren’t for her we wouldn’t eat.”

As if on cue, Flo entered. Lily knew that she had to have overheard all of

the talk about her. "Your ears must have been burning, Flo. We were admiring your table arrangements."

Poor Flo, thought Lily. She was blushing, trying not to show her embarrassment. Lily knew Flo didn't take compliments well.

Before Flo could comment, two young women that catered for Flo's side business stepped through the swinging kitchen doors. One was carrying a large soup tureen, the other baskets of bread.

The dinner conversation was light and pleasant as they enjoyed the feast that Flo had prepared for them. Lily looked at John over her wineglass. He smiled at her, she returned his smile and let her eyes linger on his full lips, at just that moment Edmund asked him a question about someone in the firm. He quickly turned away and answered him, breaking his gaze with Lily.

After dinner they all sat in the drawing room and enjoyed their dessert of peach cobbler and coffee. Lily sat beside John on the settee while Edmund entertained Christine at the piano with one of his better selections.

"Do you also play as well, Mrs. Barrington?"

Being called Mrs. Barrington made Lily feel like Edmund's mother. Why was John calling her that again?

"Please call me Lily. No, Edmund has all the talent in this family."

"I don't believe that's true for a minute. You are the perfect hostess. Christina and I agreed on that after our first visit. You have a way of making people feel at home."

“Thank you, you’re too kind.” Lily lightly touched his arm.

“John, I just wanted you to know that Edmund thinks the world of you. He’s says you’re doing an amazing job.”

“That is a very kind thing to say Lily. I appreciate Edmund taking me under his wing.”

“I can tell you’ll go far.” Lily placed her hand on John’s knee. She could see the excitement in his eyes, his pupils grew larger, and his lips were covered with a sly grin. She felt a bit embarrassed and wondered if the martinis were beginning to take effect. Lily suddenly felt very self-conscious touching John’s knee. “Sorry, I didn’t mean to touch your knee.”

“Lily, you can touch me any time you want,” John whispered.

Lily and John burst into laughter. Christine and Edmund looked up briefly.

“Do tell us what’s so funny,” Edmund remarked. John and Lily glanced at each other and laughed even more.

“John was telling me a funny story about someone at your firm.”

“No doubt it must be about Roger Kim. I swear he keeps us rolling.”

Lily glanced at John. “I knew that you were just teasing John.” She smiled and winked.

“But, I wasn’t. I mean it Lily. Anytime you like.” John rose and walked over to his wife and Edmund.

After John’s cool reception the other night, Lily was somewhat surprised

by his flirty manner. Her hands trembled when she picked up the elegant martini pitcher.

“Let me help you with that”

John said taking the pitcher from Lily’s hand and pouring her drink for her.

“Thank you.” Lily said as she sipped her drink.

“I think I rattled you. If I did, then I’m sorry.”

“No, you didn’t, I was just surprised that’s all. You seemed very uninterested in me the other evening.

“I don’t know what to say.”

“I guess what I want to know is when I could touch you again?”

John smiled a most wicked smile. “Do you have a wine cellar?”

Lily smiled and tried not to show her joy. What a clever, mischievous boy he was. He had been thinking about her like she had been thinking about him.

“Edmund, John and I are going to go select a desert wine. We’ll be back in a few minutes.” Lily led John down the hallway to the wine cellar.

“If I lived here, I would always be getting lost.” John took Lily’s hand in his.

“After a while you would get use to it. The house is not as large as it seems.”

“You’re right, it’s larger.”

“I guess it is,” Lily said conceding.

As they walked down the stairs, Lily's stomach was turning flip flops. The thought of being with John again excited her. As she turned to switch on the light, John spun her around and kissed her deeply and passionately. She kissed him back, letting her hands roam over his back and ass. Finally after several minutes, he pulled away.

"I've wanted to do that since I got here."

"For some reason I thought you were mad at me." Lily said.

"Why?"

"After the first time, you seemed so distant."

"There was a lot going on. Tell you what, don't think anymore," John said kissing her again. This time running his hands over her back and squeezing her ass.

Lily let out a faint moan. "I'm going to die if we keep this up. Let's stop, we've be gone too long, they've probably noticed by now."

"Yes, you're right. Am I wearing your lipstick?"

"Oh my goodness, yes. Let me wipe it off," Lily said taking a tissue from her pocket and wiping John's lips and chin clean of her plum lipstick. She suddenly felt a guilty. When she looked in John's eyes his pupils slowly turn from brown to red. Lily stepped back and covered her mouth with her hands stifling a scream. John's angelic face was now grayish in tone. His perfect teeth were jagged and sharp. His nostrils flared and the corners of his mouth were wet with saliva. His voice was deep and raspy when he spoke. It sounded more like

an animal growling than a human voice.

“How do you like me now?” John said tilting his head to one side.

Lily tried not to stare into its eyes. She looked past it to see if there was any way she could run past it and get out of the room. It was blocking the only way to the stairs. If she screamed no one would hear her, the wine cellar was fortified like a dungeon. She stepped further into the cellar but it advanced on her.

“What are you?” She asked trying to buy some time.

“What do you think, Lily?”

“I have no idea.”

Facing it, Lily reached her arms behind her feeling blindly on the table hoping to find something she could use to defend herself.

Her hand settled on a large wine bottle. Grabbing the neck, she hurled the bottle towards its head. There was a loud thud as the bottle made contact with its forehead, and broke into several pieces. Its eyes rolled back into its head before it fell to the ground. Lily quickly jumped over it and ran up the stairs to the pantry. Locking the door to the wine cellar once she was safely inside, she ran towards Edmund and Christine’s voices in the drawing room.

There was another familiar voice to be heard as well. It was John’s voice. John who attacked her. John who had changed into a demon/werewolf in front of her very eyes was now sitting on a chair sipping a dry martini. Lily was stunned; her mind could not comprehend what had just happen to her.

Before she could speak, Edmund rose from his chair and walked over to her.

“Lily you’re out of breath, what on earth have you been doing? Running around the cellar? We’ve been waiting for ages for you to return with the wine for dessert. Lily was dumbfounded; she didn’t know what to say. John and Christine were both staring at her like she had two heads. She took a moment to look at her at herself in the mirror on the wall across the room. She looked flustered and disheveled, her hair was a tangled mess, she was dripping with perspiration and there was a run in her hose.

“Are you alright Lily? Did you fall?” Christine asked rising from her seat and pouring her a glass of water.

“No, I’m okay. I saw a rather large spider and I tripped trying to get away from it. I’m afraid the bottle of wine fared even worse than I did. Edmund, could I speak with you for a minute?” Lily said squeezing Edmund’s arm.

“Why, yes of course.” He followed her out of the room.

“Excuse us for a moment,” he told their guests as they stepped out into the hallway.

Lily was still holding Edmund’s arm as they stood in the hallway. “What is so important? This isn’t about any spider, is it Lily?”

“No, it isn’t. I didn’t see a spider. Edmund, was John with you the entire time I was in the wine cellar?”

“He followed you down there, but said that you sent him back up with a

bottle of Vodka while you search for the Chateau Rothschild 61'. Why?"

If John was upstairs, who or what was in the cellar?

"I guess I was just spooked, that's all. I'll be okay, I made sort of a mess down there. I'll have one of Flo's assistants clean up the cellar. Why don't you go back to our guests, I'll be there shortly," Lily said kissing Edmund on the cheek.

She found Flo and her two assistants talking as they were washing and drying dishes.

"Flo, would you be a dear and have one of your assistants clean up the wine cellar? I accidentally dropped a bottle of wine."

Lily didn't know if anything was in the wine cellar but she was too afraid to go herself.

"Yes of course."

Before she could ask, the short brunette put down her drying towel, and turned towards Flo. "I'll go," she said and headed towards the wine cellar.

Lily waited in the kitchen as the young girl descended the stairs to the cellar. She half-expected to hear screaming coming from the cellar, but a few minutes later she emerged shaking her head. "Nothing to clean up, maybe someone else got to it first." She turned the light off and closed the door.

Lily was too stunned to speak, had she imagined it all?

"Thank you," Turning on her heels she headed back to the drawing room. Was John a werewolf? Had she told him to take the wine upstairs and forgotten



all about it? Lily felt her grip on reality slipping. Somehow something from the other night had traveled back to her and was now manifesting itself in her subconscious.

“Ah, there you are,” Edmund commented as Lily entered the room. “We were just about to send a search party for you.”

“Not necessary, I’ve been gone a few short minutes. Now, be a dear and open this wine.” Lily handed Edmund the bottle of wine that was sitting on the bar. She was careful to move around the room without looking at either John or Christine.

“Now, we should decide what we are going to do for the rest of the evening,” Edmund announced.

“Can we play a game?” Christine offered.

“Sure, we could play your favorite game, Lily?” Edmund looked at her for confirmation.

“I wouldn’t say it’s my favorite game,” Lily said trying not to blush. “I just think some of the questions are very thought provoking. To be honest, I’m not much in the mood for a game. How about a walk around the grounds to work off dinner?” Lily suggested.

“If that’s what you want my dear,” Edmund said standing up and walking towards the large French doors.

“Yes, a breath of fresh air sounds good,” Christina commented looking at John. “Don’t you think honey?”

“Yes, let’s go for a walk.” He turned to smile at Lily.

Lily avoided his eyes as she stepped through the doorway and walked with Christine into the crisp evening air.

They walked for about an hour around the lake up Box Hill and across the meadow that was still covered with yellow and blue flowers. The scent of lilacs was in the air, reminding Lily of her childhood. Upon returning to the house Lily excused herself, she wanted to turn in early. Christine, John and Edmund stayed up for a nightcap.

\* \* \* \*

Lily awoke with a horrific migraine and stayed in bed all day. Edmund played host to the couple, which included an early round of golf, and a late breakfast. After which they said their goodbyes, and headed home. Edmund and Lily didn’t talk about her migraine, she knew he was disappointed that she had abandoned their guests.

Unable to reach Madame G, Lily felt she was on her own when it came to protecting herself against whatever was happening. She put on a crucifix that her mother had given her many years before around her neck. Grabbing her sunglasses, she headed out to the pool.

She heard the side gate open and in walked Edmund carrying a stack of books. Lily nearly laughed when she saw that he was wearing the Hawaiian-print shirt she had bought him on their last trip to the islands. She had bought it as a dare because she doubted Edmund, always so conservative would wear it.

For some odd reason he however loved the shirt.

“Mind if I join you?”

“No, not at all.” Lily said as she watched Edmund pull back the curtain of the cabana.

“It might be better for you in here, the sun can’t be good for your headache.” Lily thought a moment and then realized that Edmund was probably right, the shade would be better for her. Packing up her book, shades and drinks she followed him into the cabana. From the circular bed she watched him undress.

“I think I’ve just what the doctor ordered,” Edmund stated, stepping out of his shorts. Fully naked, he bent down and removed Lily’s hat.

He slid the straps of her swimsuit down her shoulders to her waist. Leaning, Edmund began kissing and licking her large breasts. Lily moaned as Edmund worked her swimsuit down to her knees and pulled it off all together. Parting her legs he climbed on top of her. Lily gasped when he entered her. Forceful at first, he became gentler as they proceeded. She kept her eyes closed as they had sex in her cabana not fifty feet from her home. Lily pushed her thoughts far from her mind, focusing instead on enjoying the moment. She succeeded only too well as she reached a mind-blowing climax. Instead of moaning or making any sound, she dug her fingernails into Edmund’s back. She heard him groan as he came. He smiled, kissed her, and rolled over on the bed and fell asleep.

Lily lay there for a moment before pulling on her bathing suit. She grabbed her wrap and hat and walked back into the house.

Lily dropped her clothes on the floor and headed into the shower. She could not remember the last time she and Edmund had sex. As she sat in front of the mirror brushing her wet hair, she noticed that her crucifix was missing from around her neck. She looked down on her vanity for it, glimpsing a shadow out of the corner of her eye as she did so. She spun around and was knocked to the ground by a forceful blow to her face.

Trying to sit up, she noticed the shoes first, looking up she recognize the man she had been dancing with at the Voodoo gathering. Lily was beginning to think he wasn't a man at all, but a spirit that the group had unknowingly conjured. She suspected that he had inhabited John's body and Edmund's, but why, she did not know. She heard a noise that sounded like an animal growling, and realized that it was coming from the corner of the room where the man was swaying. His eyes were rolled up in his head and he was repeating some incantation that Lily could not make out. She tried to scream, but no sound came out of her mouth. She tried to move, but her feet would not move. She was completely paralyzed. Lily watched in horror as the man in his Voodoo trance moved towards her as if he was floating.

On his outstretched palm was something small and bloody, Lily could not tell if it were human or animal. She didn't know if she was hallucinating, but the heart was still beating. The man placed the clammy heart on Lily's forehead. The

blood from it slowly dripped down her face. She closed her eyes hoping that when she opened them the man would be gone and things would be back to normal. She heard a woman's voice in the room and realized it was Flo.

Lily's tried to indicate to Flo that she was in trouble. Flo smiled and wiped the blood from Lily's forehead with her fingers before spreading it on her own forehead. She laughed at Lily's horrified expression. Flo wasn't there to help her; she was there to hurt her as well.

"Well Lily, it's time the tables turn for you and me," Flo said, rolling her eyes back into her head and repeating several incantations.

Lily opened her eyes with a start. Disoriented and achy, she sat up in bed and looked around the room. She was in Flo's room, lying in Flo's bed. Lily managed to get to her feet despite being dizzy. Something felt different, something she could not explain, she felt lighter, as she reached up to touch her hair, she knew. Lily let out a scream as she realized that she was no longer in her body. She walked to the small bathroom off of the bedroom and peered into the mirror. Lily's reflection was now replaced by Flo's. Her full figure was replaced with Flo's slight frame. Her hair was completely gray, parted in the middle and pulled back in a bun. Her bright, deep-set brown eyes were Flo's grey and lifeless ones. Lily heard herself scream, a long blood-curdling sound, as Flo in Lily's body appeared in the reflection behind her.

"What the hell have you done? Why am I in your body?" Lily asked in Flo's voice.

"Flo, I have no idea what you're talking about. Could you please get started on dinner, we're expecting guests." With that *Flo* turned on her heels and left. Lily felt weak, she grabbed the edge of the sink to steady herself. She walked back into the bedroom and sat on the edge of the bed.

"Why?" She whispered. Hearing a sound she straightened up as Edmund walked past the room. He backed up and popped his head in.

"Flo, is my brown suit at the cleaners? I can't seem to find it anywhere."

Lily was unable to respond she just stood there staring at Edmund. He would never believe that she and Flo had switched bodies. Edmund didn't believe in Voodoo, and never would.

"Never mind, I'll ask Lily."

Lily heard her voice in the distance as *Flo* walked up the stairs towards the bedroom.

"Darling, would you be a dear and make me a martini. I'm dying of thirst," *Flo* ask Edmund.

She heard Edmund's heavy footsteps walking down the stairs. *Lily* braced herself as she heard *Flo* calling her name.

"Flo, dear Flo. I was wondering if you would be so kind as to make up the guestroom. I'm expecting my friend Lady Amanda to stay for a while."

Lily wanted to scream as she stared at her herself, her old self. "Look at it this way, I'm doing you a favor. You were wasting your life anyway, and you never appreciated Edmund."

“You won’t get away with this. I’ll find a way to change us back.”

“I don’t think so. You were never very good at Voodoo. I’ve convinced Edmund to close up the house, and we are going to travel for several months. I’ve convinced him that John can handle the firm in his absence.”

Lily flew into a rage, if *Flo* were to leave she would never get her body back. Lily feverishly looked around the room for something she could use to prevent Flo from leaving. Her eyes settled on a candlestick on the fireplace mantle. She ran towards it and grabbed it, knocking the candle to the floor. When she spun around *Flo* was there in front of her. Lily took wild swings at Flo, missing her each time. With her last swing, Lily lost her balance and fell to the ground. *Flo* bent down and whispered something in her ear. Lily felt a sharp pain in her side. Lily touched her side which was now tingling. Her hand was wet with blood. *Flo* laughed as she folded the knife and screamed for Edmund.

The last thing Lily remembered before losing consciousness was Flo in Lily’s body smiling down over her as she hugged Edmund.